

**Policy: PK 04-11**

**Policy Title: Westfield Geo-Caching Policy**

**Policy Purpose: Set forth rules and regulations regarding geo-caching in Westfield park facilities**

**Implementation Date: March 1, 2011**

**Revision Date: NA**

## **City of Westfield Parks and Recreation Department Geo-Caching Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide rules, regulations and guidance for the management of geo-caching activities on Westfield Parks and Recreation Department properties. Any person who participates is subject to all Westfield Parks and Recreation rules and regulations. Geo-caching is an activity that requires a permit so that the Westfield Parks and Recreation Department staff can monitor the activity within park boundaries and prevent any detrimental impact on the parks themselves, as well as protect the safety of all park visitors.

### **Definitions:**

1. Cache – term refers to a container that is used in association with the activity of geo-caching. The object usually contains such items as a logbook, pen, pencil, map and/ or trinkets.
2. Department – refers to Westfield Parks and Recreation Department.
3. Property – refers to any property owned, leased, or maintained by the Westfield Parks and Recreation Department.
4. Geo-caching – refers to a game pursued by global positioning systems (GPS) users. An individual or organization places a cache and shares its location on the internet. A participant in the game applies for GPS coordinates to locate the target cache or caches. When located, the participant records the find on the designated website such as [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). The game may provide that objects are traded at the cache.
5. Multi-cache – refers to containers that are located from the information received in another cache.
6. Virtual cache – refers to the target for geo-caching for which there is no container. The location itself is the cache. Objects are not traded at the site of a virtual cache.

### **Permit Application:**

1. A person wishing to place a cache within one of the Department's properties must obtain an "official geo-caching permit" before placing the cache. A cache which has been placed without obtaining a permit from the Department will be removed and may be returned to the owner. If the owner cannot be reached, the cache will then be disposed of by the Department staff within one month of notification.
2. The Department Administration is authorized to issue, condition, or deny any permit application.

3. The application may be obtained from and returned to the Department's Administration Office. (Exhibit A). Applications will be reviewed within one week of receipt.
4. Permits are good for two (2) years from issuing date.

### **General Prohibitions, Limitations and Requirements:**

The following applies to the placement of any cache and/or any geo-caching activity:

1. A person must not violate any Department rules or regulations, or any local, state or federal laws.
2. Areas within parks that contain any of the following may not qualify for placement of geo-caches :
  - Areas containing environmentally sensitive ecosystems
  - Areas containing historical sites
  - Areas containing endangered flora or fauna
3. A person must not dig or otherwise disrupt the ground when placing a cache.
4. A person is allowed to apply for **one permit**, which will allow them to place **one cache** with the Department's properties.
5. The Department is not required to approve any multi-cache, but may approve a multi-cache with no more than four (4) stops within the multi-cache.
6. The maximum number of caches per Westfield Parks and Recreation Department properties is up to the discretion of the Department's Administration.
7. The person who holds the permit must inspect the cache at least once every six months to ensure that it meets all permit criteria. During the inspection, the permit holder must remove any inappropriate items. These include, but are not limited to; food, alcohol, firearms, drugs, items not suitable for minors, or other items which may pose a danger to people or wildlife.
8. An official geo-caching permit expires two (2) years after the date of issue.

### **Permit Standards:**

The Department Administration shall exercise reasonable discretion in determining whether to issue, condition, or deny an application for an official geo-caching permit. In the exercise of discretion, the following factors and principles apply:

1. A cache cannot be approved for placement in any sensitive archaeological, historical or ecological area.
2. Any schedule resource management activity, such as prescribed burns and species eradication, shall be considered in evaluating a permit application.
3. A cache cannot be approved for placement in an area that could reasonably cause danger to a geo-caching participant or to any other person who visits a Department property.
4. The Department Administration has the right to require a person requesting an official geo-caching permit to provide a photograph of the cache, the exact site and coordinates where the cache is placed, or both.
5. Any factor reasonably consistent with proper use and protection of the particular site.

6. A permit is required for a virtual cache so that the Department can monitor the area for detrimental impact and prevent against any virtual cache being placed within sensitive park areas.

**Permit Suspension or Revocation and Site Reclamation:**

1. The Department may suspend or revoke a geo-caching permit if a term is violated, or if the location of the cache is found to pose a threat to the safety of park visitors or the surrounding environment. The Department shall make every attempt to notify the permit holder of the action, as well as any designated websites.
2. Upon the suspension, revocation or termination of a geo-caching permit, the permit holder is responsible for the removal of the cache, for the site restoration, and for any associated expenses.
3. The reason for the Department's actions shall be recorded on the permit. If the permit holder elects to relocate the cache, a new permit will need to be reviewed and issued.